



## FROM THE DESK OF THE DDSN MEDICAL CONSULTANT

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



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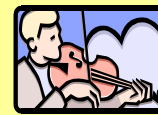


### HEALTH MAINTENANCE REVIEW

In these Newsletters we have looked at many different ways that we can keep our consumers and ourselves healthy and safe. As we move into a new year, we can pause and perhaps repeat some of these important messages. It is often a time of resolutions but any small change that we can achieve is worth it. Here are some areas of health that can help our consumers and keep them well and in a safe environment.

- ❑ Reducing the spread of infection by practicing good infection control measures is a useful goal for us to address:
  - Wash our hands – this reduces the chance of transferring cold or “flu” viruses and other germs to our mouth, nose, and eyes and getting ill.
  - Use tissues if we have a cough or sneeze – this reduces the spread of respiratory viruses.
  - Stay at home if we are ill, feverish, coughing – this means fewer people catch the illness and we get better quickly.
  - Get our shots – this means each of us is less likely to get ill. Each year check that your consumers and yourself have seen the doctor for the “flu” shot. Remember to keep up with tetanus/diphtheria shots for everyone every 10 years.
  - *Repeating* – Everyone wash their hands – it is our best single protection against the spread of infection.
- ❑ Teaching about and maintaining safety measures is an important responsibility we have.
  - Teach and follow fire and road safety rules (danger of matches, evacuation plans, seat belt use and no drinking and driving).
  - Protect everyone from weather stress (cover in winter, sun block in summer, and proper hydration).
  - Take care with medications (storage, following directions, follow-up).

- ❑ Efforts to maintain and improve the ongoing health of each person are worthwhile. Our notes have covered several areas of health and there are several general health measures that can help. There's no need to do them all but it is wise to have small successes in any of the challenges.
  - Learn what is needed for each person's health (individual's health profile, diet, exercise, medications, allergies).
  - Maintain a good diet (portion control, variety of foods, watch the fat, any special diet need, such as texture).
  - Encourage exercise (any activity to a sensible degree, not just changing the TV remote).
  - Keep a good fluid intake (adequate water each day and avoid alcohol).
  - Avoid smoking (create circumstances where it is not needed, save money and health).
  - Keep good dental health (brushing, flossing, and caring for teeth improves over all general health).
- ❑ Stress can be a negative experience for each person. We have a challenge to reduce it, manage it, and teach coping skills to both our consumers and ourselves.
  - Have a balance of work with rest, exercise, and recreation.
  - Nurture friendships and grow within faith communities.
  - Consider relaxation or meditation techniques.
  - Be kind to ourselves and others.



Efforts in any of these four areas can be helpful. One way may be to make January "avoid the cold" month, February "fire safety" month, March "lets eat better" month, etc. (make sure you save November for "check for flu shots").

I also wish to thank Linda Daves from managing to translate my scribble into readable sentences and thanks to many colleagues for help gathering information from textbooks, journals, websites, educational meetings, and experience.

Best wishes for a Healthy 2004!